Proposed Final Report:

Economic Impact of Public Natural Resource Lands

Legislative Auditor's Conclusion:

County economies are influenced more by how public lands are used than by the amount of publicly owned lands

JLARC Staff
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Staff to the Joint Legislative Audit & Review Committee

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Is more public natural resource land detrimental to county economic vitality?

Is There a General Answer?

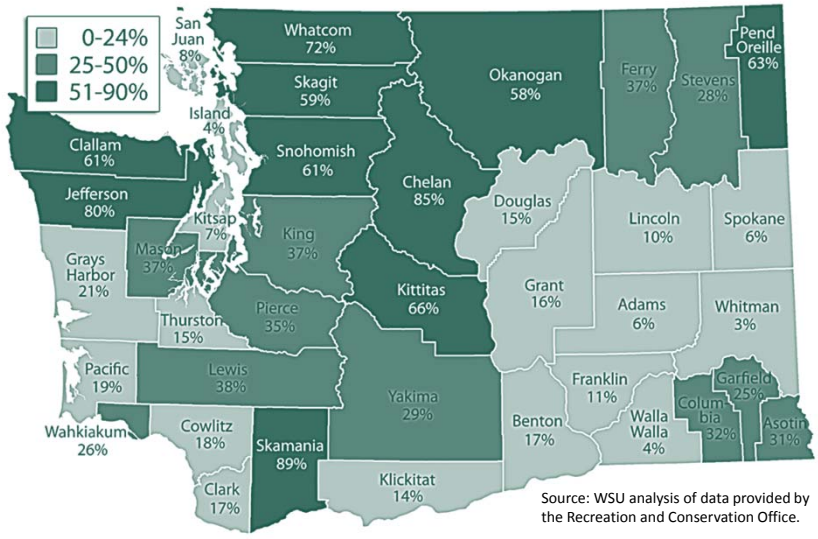
Percent of public natural resource land was not detrimental to county economies

What About Specific Sites?

Specific sites may have positive or negative economic impacts: Use matters more than ownership

No Legislative Auditor recommendations
No formal responses from agencies

37% of WA is state and federal natural resource lands



Source: WSU analysis of data provided by the Recreation and Conservation Office.

Economists estimated the relationship between public land and economic vitality

They used a statistical tool: regression analysis

- Percent of Public Land

Controlled for Factors Such As:

- Population density
- Interstate highway density
- Topography

Economic Vitality

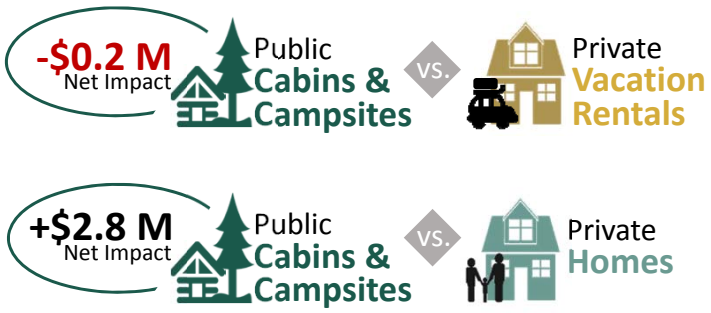
- Job Growth
- Income Growth
- Population Growth

In general, public land was not detrimental to county economies between 1990-2010

- No consistent evidence that counties with high percentages of public land were negatively impacted by lands
  - Lands managed for habitat, conservation, or passive recreation may have small positive relationship to income and jobs
    - Consistent with recent academic research

Specific sites may have positive or negative net economic impacts

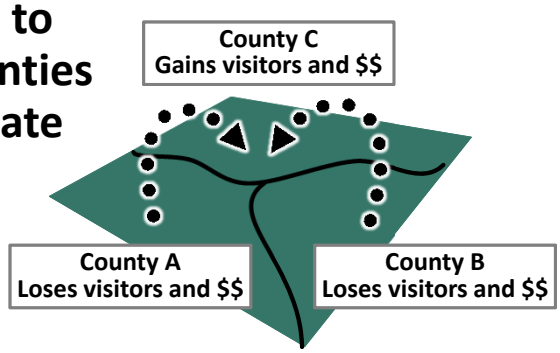
Different uses yield different net impacts



Data and results are site specific and cannot be generalized to other sites

Economic impact analyses may not capture broader impacts

May not identify impacts to other counties or the state



Land use matters more than ownership

- Percent of public natural resource land was **not detrimental to county economies**
  - Specific sites may have **positive or negative net economic impacts**
    - Estimates of economic impacts **depend on land use change, assumptions, and site-specific data**

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http://leg.wa.gov/jlarc/reports/2015/PublicLandsEcon/pf/default.htm